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Ontdekkend levensbeschouwelijk leren

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2014

document version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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citation for published version (APA)

Speelman, J. (2014). *Ontdekkend levensbeschouwelijk leren: Naar vernieuwde levensbeschouwelijke vorming in het basisonderwijs*. [, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam]. Boekencentrum Academic.

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English summary

Worldview-learning by discovery.

On the way to renewed worldview-education in primary schools.

What place can be granted to worldview-education in primary schools in the Netherlands, which is characterized by greatly increased cultural and religious diversity in the student population and the team members? Schools face the need to reflect on these developments. Research into the background of this increased diversity and its implications for primary education, is important. It is taken as a starting point that the term "worldview" includes both religious and non-religious beliefs about the meaning of life and reality.

The concept of 'normative professionalism' has entered the educational context. This means that teachers are expected to adopt a standard for determining what they consider good education and how they want to act in it, but also that they can reflect on their professional actions critically. The authenticity of teachers is central to the exercise of their profession. Teachers are role models. Research is needed into the way the personal value-orientation of teachers is established. The way they relate to diversity in society and the influence exerted by this positioning on their professional actions has not previously taken place in either denominational or non-denominational education.

In 2006, the government obliged all primary schools to pay attention to active citizenship and social inclusion. The focus therein is on democracy, participation and identity. Schools should pay attention to different worldviews. In this, citizenship education is strongly linked to worldview education.

In various regions of the country there has been a sharp decline in the number of pupils in primary education. In these regions, denominational and non-denominational schools are more likely to merge. For these schools, the question in which way they want to give worldview education is very topical.

The central research question is: 'To what extent is there normative professionalism of primary school teachers regarding the worldview dimension of school identity and what implications flow from it for the conduct of worldview dialogue in the classroom?' The research consists of a theoretical part and an empirical part. The theoretical part contains a literature review on the minds of philosophers and theologians who see worldview-traditions as dynamic and changing. Their work provides insightful analyzes of believer and unbeliever positions in today's society.

Theoretical framework

The vision of Charles Taylor takes a central place in the theoretical research. Taylor sees secularism as: faith has become an individual choice. There are alternatives to belief in God. The choice is connected with lived experience. People may experience moments of fullness or fulfillment in their lives where they have sense of the transcendent. The realization that there is a landmark, may be the cause that they never thought to be able to reach that place. This intermediate state may well be the position of the believer and the unbeliever, says Taylor. Believers no longer have a theistic image of God. God is no longer positioned as a person outside the existing reality. Unbelief does not mean that any sense of fullness is absent. People assume a 'natural' order, as opposed to a 'supernatural' order; an 'immanent' world towards a potentially "transcendent" world. Taylor points out that "immanent transcendence" can be experienced, involving transformation by *agapè*: charity without self-interest. Transcendence thus receives an interpretation that focuses on the context of human action. Man focuses on the needs of the other, seeks what is best for the other person but does not act out of self-interest. The nature of transcendence has yet to be decided. Transcendence can be connected with God, but this is no longer obvious. It may also involve a closed immanent frame: transcendence is rejected because man himself directs his development. In today's society a closed immanent frame becomes an available option for everyone, according to Taylor. If we are left to ourselves, it is important to treat our fellowman well. Human welfare, human development, human rights and equality are central. Faith in God is not necessary. The current desire for transcendence shows that the realization that there is more increases. The result may be that people will seek spiritual fullness that transcends the boundaries of denominations. Taylor (2009a, 702) believes that this process is taking shape nowadays. New possibilities will be opened. 'We are at the beginning of a new era of religious search of which no one can predict the outcome.'

The vision of Levinas corresponds to the transformation of *agapè* of Taylor. Levinas is convinced that another reality is accessible by responding to the appeal that the face of the other does to me. God is accessible by doing the other right, without losing his transcendence. Spinoza too (1632-1677) connects faith and practice. In recent years a remarkable amount of interest in his thinking can be observed. Spinoza's God is immanent and transcendent. There is only one reality: God, all things immanent within it. God does not coincide with the world; there is always a fundamental distinction between God and the world. This vision appeals to many people. According to Spinoza, people strive to survive. They can see that commitment to the well-being of others is necessary to own and general well-being and even increases it. The ethical attitude that follows is not motivated by a sense of duty or moral precepts. Spinoza believes that a person who does good

works is a believer and someone who calls himself a believer, but does not do good works, is an unbeliever.

The insights of Deleuze and Derrida are also discussed in the theoretical research. Deleuze wants the image of the tree that has dominated Western thought, replaced by the image of the rhizome. The image of the tree and the root foundation represents a fixed meaning which needs to be taken over. A rhizome is an underground root system with multiple inputs. It can take different forms, branch out and expand in all directions. This requires an outside. There is never 'unity'. New roads are always possible. Another, and the other, are central to rhizomatic thinking. According to Derrida the present in the thinking is partly determined by the absent. It therefore has a dynamic form, is in motion, 'in deconstruction'. This requires an open, reflective attitude, alignment with the 'other' and willingness to give up existing beliefs. No religion or believer can claim to know the absolute truth about God. God is related to 'what comes'. Therefore, deconstruction is a source of hope and spirituality. Derrida wants to get unsuspected meanings of philosophical texts forward. Readers can assign different meanings to the same text by filling in the open spaces. However, the absent is not to be determined unambiguously. Aforementioned thinkers indicate that we need to start thinking otherwise about truth in worldviews.

Kitzberger advocates autobiographical Bible reading. This creates a two-way process: personal experiences influence the interpretation of the text and the text affects the personal experience. There is transformation of text and reader in a process with an open end. According to Taylor transformation means that things have meaning in an entirely new way in the context in which people think, feel and live. In order to be able to interpret these meanings, it is necessary to create new language. Patte would always compare interpretations with those of others. The personal interpretation should not be seen as the absolute truth and not be imposed on others. Communication is important in the quest for meaning in human existence. Talks between representatives of different religions and talks with dissenters within the own tradition are essential, as well as reflection on own thinking and dialogue with the texts of worldview-traditions.

All this has important implications for worldview education in the primary school. First it is important that schools establish their vision of the school identity and show the relationship between the formal and the lived identity in the school. Is there a broad view of the school identity? This means that the worldview dimension of the school's identity is integrated with other dimensions. The personal ideological orientation of teachers is not independent of the exercise of their profession. Value-free education is impossible. And any reflection on values is a worldview orientation. A narrow sense of the school identity is therefore impossible. Even in non-denominational education, a worldview dimension is

always present. The vision of Taylor on believing and unbelieving positions and recognition of transcendence can give new impetus to think about school identity.

The religious-pedagogical action in denominational education is becoming less focused on faith transmission. It is often associated with social development. The limited information that pupils in non-denominational schools receive about different worldviews does not lead to greater understanding of others. The knowledge of the content of worldview traditions has declined and meanings, to which the religious language refers, are no longer recognized. A good preparation for life in a pluralistic society requires schools to help their pupils construct meaning for their lives through interaction with others.

Miedema wants to take transformation and appropriation as a starting point for worldview education. Meanings from the worldview tradition are then transformed into personal meanings. The teacher guides the pupils and acts as a partner, not as an expert. Within the concept of 'abductive theology' this can be realized. It implies that bold hypotheses are formulated in which personal experiences are linked to the content of the tradition. The interpretation is a venture because only the concrete experience is a certainty. There is a reciprocal relationship with the content of the tradition, in which both tradition and personal experience may come to stand in a different light. It is possible to start from the experience, but also from the text. This requires a new way of thinking among teachers. They must refrain from transmitting fixed meanings, adopt a discerning attitude and offer pupils space to develop their own vision. Their vision may also develop in the process. However, the term 'theology' is often associated with theology as a science, the dominant position of churches and established truths of faith. The term 'abduction' also sounds too technical to be used in daily practice in schools. 'Worldview-learning by discovery' can replace these concepts and may facilitate the introduction of the concept in the public school.

Biesta calls for recognition of deconstruction in education. Deconstruction does justice to diversity by accepting each other. It is aimed at caring for the other. The content of worldview traditions can significantly contribute to this. Doing justice to what is excluded, caring for others, the contingencies that may come: these themes play a key role in worldview traditions. The stories of traditions often make use of symbols and metaphors that are less well known. Attention to the didactics of symbols is necessary. A seeking, discerning attitude in dealing with the content of the tradition can be developed through the process of philosophical conversations in primary education. Teachers may be thus inspired to introduce a worldview dialogue to their pupils in the same way.

The question is whether rules of interpretation may be released in interpreting texts from philosophical traditions. When there is misunderstanding, Derrida indicates that there is no limit to fix, because a solid foundation and clear criteria do not exist. By asking

open questions and looking for answers in a dialogue, new insights can emerge and be tested. The dialogue is the means to detect incorrect assumptions and errors and to correct these.

In the context of citizenship education, it is important that schools bring their pupils into contact with the worldview diversity in society. Denominational schools must fulfill this obligation within the formal identity of the school. Non-denominational schools must choose between passive neutrality and active pluralism. The personal value orientation and the worldview of teachers are important factors. This places demands on their normative professionalism. Teachers should articulate what their goal is for the field of religious education and indicate how they want to achieve this. Through an open, reflective attitude and willingness to tune in to 'the other' justice can be done to diversity. The professionals should also have eye for 'signals of transcendence'. Then pupils might experience something transcendent.

Empirical research

Empirical research into the personal motives and value orientations of teachers took place in Protestant, Catholic, Islamic and non-denominational schools. The schools are situated in a village, a medium-sized town and a big city. Following on the central research question, five sub-questions for the empirical study have been prepared: 'How do teachers connect their personal belief system to the worldview tradition in which the school is and what is the influence of their personal worldview biography?', 'How do teachers look at the diversity in society and the student population and how do they pay attention to it in the context of religious education and citizenship education?', 'How do teachers look at legitimizing worldview education for all pupils in primary school?', 'Do teachers think that the content of worldview traditions can play a meaningful role in the worldview education in school? If so, in what way?' and 'Is attention paid to life-questions of pupils by primary school teachers? If so, in what way?'

In the empirical study the interpretive variant of a qualitative approach was chosen. The instrument used was a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire for the interviews included questions about personal data and a description of the diversity of the group to which the respondent teaches, questions about the personal worldview development of respondents, questions about the connection of the personal worldview to the formal identity of the school, questions about worldview education in the school and dealing with life-questions of pupils, questions about dealing with diversity and citizenship, and a question about the vision of respondents to the concept of 'ideology'. The interviews were conducted from October to June in the same school year. They were recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed word for word.

The data analysis was performed using the computer program MAXQDA 2007. This program assigns a code to text fragments and marks it with a color and a label. The codes are stored in a code system. The first phase of the analysis was the application of open codes to text fragments in the first interviews. In the next phase the list of primary codes was distributed as much as possible over head codes. Text fragments could then be coupled directly to the existing codes. The program makes it possible to link different codes quickly.

Results

The empirical research shows that the majority of schools involved in the study does not pinpoint the worldview dimension of the school identity. The subject is rarely discussed in team meetings. When talked about, it is done under the guidance of an identity advisor. Respondents connect the term 'worldview' primarily to religious beliefs. Respondents who consider themselves non-religious, do not see their personal value orientation as a worldview. They have a narrow conception of worldview education: this occurs when the content of worldview traditions is involved.

'Normative professionalism regarding the worldview dimension of the school identity' is not actually present in the primary school. The relationship between the formal identity of the school and the lived identity, which is linked to the personal worldview system of teachers, is not clear. The term 'worldview' is linked to religious beliefs and "believing" is associated with a theistic image of God, dogma and truth claims of churches. Therefore there are almost never talks about worldview in the teams. Few respondents identify themselves as 'believers', but do not see themselves as unbelievers.

The respondents' answers indicate the vision of Taylor on believing and unbelieving positions and his focus on transformation by agape can be enlightening in the school. Many respondents put humanity at the heart of their vision. It is desirable that a different conceptual framework is provided for conducting a dialogue on worldview in the school where the distinction believers-unbelievers plays no role. Transcendence awareness that is connected to the actions of man can occupy a central position in this context.

The outcome of the research points to opportunities for legitimizing worldview education for all pupils in primary education. The emphasis should be on transcendence awareness and ethical behavior that is motivated by agapè. The wisdom found in the sources of worldview traditions can possibly be applied thereto, provided there is an open approach and the suspicion is removed regarding indoctrination. Worldview diversity is not seen as enrichment. Legitimacy is possible provided that the stories from religious traditions can be interpreted from transcendence awareness that is not associated with a traditional image of God and that there is no truth claim and transfer of fixed meanings.

The research shows that citizenship education may give an impetus to worldview encounters by paying attention to different worldview traditions in an accessible way without suspicion of indoctrination.

The theoretical research provides insights that create space for encounter and dialogue with other worldviews inside and outside the school where differences may persist. It also offers a perspective for cooperation schools. By applying 'worldview-learning by discovery' the dividing line between denominational and non-denominational education may disappear.

The motivation for 'worldview-learning by discovery' can occur by philosophizing with the students first and then apply the technique of philosophical conversation to worldview education. In the empirical study, it is concluded that not enough teachers are able to bring the concept 'worldview-learning by discovery' in practice. It lacks teachers of general knowledge of philosophical traditions and knowledge of symbols and metaphors in their sources. Respondents have insufficient skills to explore meanings along with students in worldview stories and mirroring own experiences in it. There is insufficient attention to the world of the individual pupils. This is no unwillingness, but inability.

Focus on increasing the knowledge and skills of prospective and current teachers regarding worldview education are necessary. The empirical research shows that methods of worldview education provide insufficient basis to support teachers by 'worldview-learning by discovery'. There is a need for training in conducting dialogues about worldviews where the transfer is not involved and both the moderator and the participants do not have the intention to convince each other.

The empirical research shows that schools need counselors who possess the ability to conduct worldview dialogues and to reflect on normative professionalism with regard to the worldview dimension of the school identity with the team. The effects of the worldview biography of teachers on their professional actions remain underexposed in most schools. Update of faith language, talk about images of God and transcendence awareness is needed to promote the worldview communication in the school teams. Advisors are needed who do not act as representatives of churches, who can think rhizomatic, who see diversity as enrichment, who advocate the deconstruction-approach and who can introduce this approach, who possess knowledge of different worldview traditions and symbolism in its sources, who can carry over different images of God and transcendence dimensions. However, this places demands on the training of these advisors.

May be in this way a new concept of worldview-education in primary school can be realized, in which the wisdom and richness of religious traditions can be meaningfully deployed for all pupils.